

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A device for preventing pirated copies of computer programs for use with a computer, comprising:

input and output devices for bidirectional data exchange with the computer;

a first memory element containing a data file that is transferrable to the computer via the output device; and

a second memory element into which data is writable by the input device.

2. The device according to claim 1, wherein the first and second memory elements are integrated into a memory chip.

3. The device according to claim 2, wherein the memory chip is a nonvolatile semiconductor memory.

4. The device according to claim 1, wherein the input and output devices are adapted to a module port of the computer so that the input and output devices are insertable into the module port.

5. A method of preventing pirated copies of computer programs, comprising the steps of:

connecting a device to a computer for bidirectional data exchange, the device including input and output devices and first and second memory elements;

transferring a first data file containing a key from the first memory element of the device to the computer; and

copying a second data file containing an identifier from the computer to the second memory element of the device.

6. The method according to claim 5, further comprising the step of entering into the computer an enable number encoded with the key.

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1. The first step is to identify the key components of the system. This involves understanding the hardware, software, and data involved.